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Pulpit Preaching

VOL. XI, No. 5 MAY, 1958

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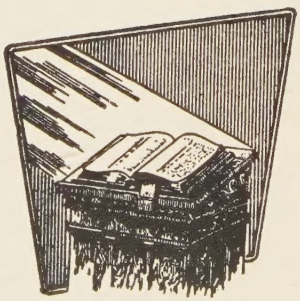

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

This month's themes are "What about the Lord's Day?" and "Great Words of Faith: the Word," another in the series on the words that proclaim our faith.

Next month's topics will be "Evangelistic Messages" and "Editor's Choice." The July themes will be "Old Testament Personalities" and "On Growing Old."

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

The Gospel of John is a two-volume addition to the Daily Study Bible series. Written by William Barclay, Scottish scholar and Bible commentator, the volumes in this series were originally published under the auspices of the Church of Scotland and were widely heralded in Britain before publication under an American imprint was made. Although the series is intended for lay leaders, any pastor will find the expositions to be homiletically suggestive and the illustrations fresh and usable. (Westminster Press, 656 pp., $2.50 each.)

Luther in Protestantism Today, by Merle William Boyer of Carthage College, identifies the mind of Luther with many of the persistent concepts of Protestantism and shows in a convincing manner how Luther revolutionized religious thought. The author is a competent and reasonable thinker in a field that is overburdened with heated controversy. His especially strong emphasis is in terms of dura-

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PREACHING IN PICTURES

Fred E. Luchs, First Congregational Church, Evanston, Illinois

So they . . . gave the sense, and caused them to understand.
—Ezra 8:8.

"When I use a word," Humpty-Dumpty said, "it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less."

Recently my wife "dragged" me to an aluminum demonstration. She insisted we must go because the hostess would get a couple of free pans if a dozen persons attended and ate the meal.

The meal was delicious. The lecture on why we should buy his aluminum, well – I came away with a few homiletical pointers. The salesman-demonstrator asked the guests how they liked the coffee. Unanimously they agreed that it completely satisfied. He asked how much coffee they would use to serve that number of people. They agreed on two measuring cups. He then jauntily said that he had used but one cup, whereupon he scooped up a cupful of coffee and threw it into the wastebasket.

The women gasped. He said nonchalantly, "Don't you do the same thing when you use two cups to get the result which I get with one?"

He then went around the group and asked each how much she would have spent for such a meal. They agreed on twelve dollars. He said the meal cost seven dollars. Thereupon he threw five dollars in the wastebasket.

The guests demonstrated. He an-

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Pulpit Preaching

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What About The Lord's Day?

SHALL WE SURRENDER OUR CHRISTIAN LORD'S DAY?

Aaron N. Meckel, First Congregational Church, St. Petersburg, Florida

(Mark 2:27, 28)

Some weeks ago, an American serviceman wrote a letter home to his loved ones. In this letter he was telling them how he managed to keep the spirit of the Christian Sabbath. Here was a boy thousands of miles from home, perhaps lonely and a bit distraught, and yet true to his great basic convictions. He told in this letter how he tried to synchronize his own personal observance of the Christian Sabbath with that of his loved ones at home.

He said: "When I think that you are at church, where I myself would love to be, I open my Bible, read a few verses, and in the inner temple of the heart, say a prayer for you and for the well being of all men."

A boy thousands of miles away from home, yet nevertheless keeping the spirit of the Christian Sabbath! The remembrance of that Christian Sabbath in his home held that boy fast and strong and true.

Emerson, always the liberal, once said: "Sunday is the core of our civilization. A day dedicated to thought and reverence."

We want to make it clear that we are not advocating blue-lawism. Not at all. We are not pleading today for a revival of the kind of Sabbath our Lord had to contend with in his day, or for a return of that of Puritan New England.

I do admire greatly the spirit of those old timers of the Puriton Commonwealth. We can hardly afford to give "three sneers" for the Puritans! They might have been somewhat somber and forbidding. But believe me, they had something we need today. They had moral backbone.

I have been reading up on some of the quaint customs of the Puritan Sabbath. Imagine sermons three hours long! What in the world would some of you, who have trouble keeping awake 20 or 30 minutes, ever do on that basis!

Some of their habits were very quaint indeed! Did you know, for instance, they had a tithing man, whose duty it was to take a long pole, and whenever he saw someone's head nodding, give him a strong rap on the head? I'm glad we have a better purpose for our deacons today! In Virginia they had a habit of passing around a snuff box when someone got sleepy. Very quaint! And yet our admiration goes out to those old timers.

Then there were the strange customs of the Sabbath of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

A woman was not allowed to look in a mirror because if she did she might see a gray hair and try to pull it out, and that would be breaking the Sabbath! People were not allowed to wear artificial teeth on the Sabbath day. So as someone has suggested, the Saints did not look their prettiest on the Sabbath.

Now, none of that for our Lord Jesus Christ! He rescued the Sabbath from its negative misuse and made it over into a radiant, positive, glad day. So much so that today we have a hymn in which we sing: "Oh day of

rest and gladness, most beautiful, most bright."

In fact, Jesus transfigured the ancient Sabbath through his own victory over death – so that today, we keep not the seventh day of the week, but the first day of the week, the Christian Lord's Day, as a memorial of that victory of His.

When His contemporaries criticized his hungry disciples for plucking a few ears of grain on the Sabbath, He held them at bay. When they criticized Him for healing the sick, He said to them: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." Then He added: "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." He claimed dominion over this day and because it is His day, it is our day. His gift to us.

He made it plain that the Christian Lord's Day is not a day for idle gossip or for sitting around with hands folded piously. Indeed not! It is a day for good deeds, a day to be kept in the spirit of reverence and rest and worship.

Now this day is at stake in our modern world. We need to be aware of the fact. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead preached a sermon in London in which he pointed out that hardly ten percent of the English people attend church regularly. He said to them: "Unless we take a moral stand for this day, our children will have no Sunday worth talking about."

Let us glance briefly at a few of the things that we need to think about with regard to our Christian Sabbath. Shall we surrender it or shall we stand fast in the spirit of Christian witness for it?

I

Consider first of all the fact that the physical and spiritual welfare of man demands that one day in seven be devoted to other than material pursuits. Jesus recognized that fact. He said: "The Sabbath was made for man." To Him this day was not a day of luxury, but a day of necessity.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said on one occasion, "He who ordained the Sabbath loved the poor." In other words, this day was not gotten up by religious cranks and die-hards, but was created by God's own finger. Our infinite and eternal Creator knew the deep need of his creatures.

There is a spiritual rhythm about life, which when we desert it, we get into trouble. Ask the doctors and the nurses in our hsopitals, or consult the ministers and the psychiatrists who deal with people. They will tell you that one out of every ten hospital beds throughout America is occupied by the mentally ill. If the Christian Sabbath was needed for rest and worship yesterday, what of today, when thousands are finding it hard to keep up with the modern pace of life? Or ask Christian business men, of which there are not a few. They are willing to stand up and to witness for the need of the Christian Lord's day. One of them said to me the other day: "Anyone ought to be able to see the common-sense value of keeping one day in seven for rest, recreation, and worship." And, said he, "If we lose our nerve and are so cowardly that we do not stand up for this day any longer, then legislation will need to be passed, in order that one day out of seven be set aside for other than material pursuits."

Or ask the toilers who wait upon us six days of the week. They need this day. They are counting on us ministers to point out the unfairness of a seven day work week. I feel I am pleading their cause.

There is a necessary spiritual rhythm which the observance of Sunday affords, and when we desert it we throw life out of gear.

John Bright, when he spoke to the Lancashire miners, used to quote the words of George Herbert on the Sabbath. "Without thy light, the week

were dark, thy torch doth show the way."

II

Now in the second place, not only do we need to observe one day in seven for the physical and spiritual well-being of humans, but we need to recognize the fact that those who would scuttle and compromise Sunday are not our friends, much as they may pretend to be. Nor are they working for the best interest of the American community.

Stop and think my friends. Suppose that through moral cowardliness we should let go of our Christian Sabbath. Then who takes over? Then what influences would prevail?

Many years ago a group of hard-headed men founded a community far out on the west coast. They founded it with one stipulation. There was to be no Christian Lord's Day. No Christian church. No Christian minister. It was to be a wide-open town. Well, they got it, and then they rued it. What happened in this wide open town? Law observance went by the board. You do not have law-observing people, apart from the influence of the church. Property values went down. No one wanted to live there. The youth of the community got into trouble. Home life perished. The ordinary decencies that pertain to living together went by the board. Then these hard-headed men admitted their mistake. They said: "It's clear that we can't found a **decent** community apart from a Christian church. We're going to have a church. We're going to send for the finest preacher we know." And they did. And then communal redemption began there.

Again, we are not thinking today of the small shop owner who keeps his shop open an hour a day on Sunday for the sake of his clients. There is a place for legitimate Sabbath enterprise. The doctor must make his call, the nurse must care for the sick. The Christian minister must give his sermon. Jesus healed on the Sabbath, and He claimed dominion over it. What we are thinking of is the secular worldly interests, highly organized and financed, which are constantly knocking on the door of our sacred institutions with the aim of destroying them. Some of us have been fighting them. We know what we are talking about, and we need to be aware of the fact that these selfish interests knock at the door of the Christian Lord's Day with the object of taking it over. You have heard the expression, "The camel's nose in the tent," haven't you? It is the story of the Arab who fetched up one night out on the desert, put up his tent, and having staked his camel on the outside, lay down to sleep. He had hardly gotten his first wink before the camel came and nosed under the flap of the tent, looked around and thought "My! how nice it is in there." Then he went a little farther, got his nose and his front legs in. Soon he got in his hump, and his back legs, until in the last scene we find the Arab on the outside of the tent and the camel on the inside. He had taken over.

Now this camel of secularization has his nose definitely in the American tent. Already he sells liquor to minors if he can get by with it, litters our newsstands with his vicious tripe, insinuates his slot machines and gambling devices in our stores. He hawks and peddles his wares over our radio systems, through our television sets, and our newspapers. Let us be clear, he cares not one whit for the moral and spiritual values which constitute the backbone in any worthwhile community; and now he wants to take control of our Christian Lord's Day.

Those of you who are parents of small children already know how hard it is to keep a semblance of reverence on the Christian Lord's Day. I think of that young mother who said to me, "First you battle the Sun-

day comics, and fold the newspaper and put it away. Then you turn the radio off, get the children scrubbed and dressed. Once in the automobile, you almost break a speed law in order to get to church in time on Sunday morning." She said to her pastor, "I am almost all done in." When you say a prayer at worship, remember the younger mothers in your congregation! My friends, I know that is true; I have two small children of my

Yes, already it is a battle to keep a semblance of reverence on a Christian Lord's Day. Now think, shall the Christian church give over this one day in seven entrusted to her by her Lord, the one day in seven in which to teach the Christian religion to thirty million or so American children, one day in seven to assemble her people for communal worship, one day in seven to teach the holy scriptures which are able to make men wise unto salvation and to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the perishing souls of men? Truly, eternal vigilance will be the price of preserving the sacredness of the Christian Lord's Day.

III

Now finally, perhaps I am obviating the obvious when I say that in this crucial hour of history, America needs her Christian Lord's Day not less, but more than ever before. We cannot afford to spiritually and morally disarm inside America. Dr. Robert Searle pointed out two principal enemies of spiritual progress. The first is secularism, boring from within; the second is Communism, attacking from without. Both of them leave out God, worship, the Christian Lord's Day, the Bible. Both black out those spiritual values which are the inner core of any worthwhile progress. If you want to know how secularism works, look around you — the constant pressure of selfish interests seeking to break down the human will, until people are simply become neutral, afraid to take a stand for our basic spiritual values.

You want to know how Communism works? Consult some of the missionaries who have been driven out of China. One of them told how Communish worked in his particular church. They did not just go and padlock the door of his mission. They called up every Saturday night and said, "At eleven o'clock tomorrow morning we are going to need your church." What happened? A great truck rolled up in front of the church, unloaded a few tons of sand in front of the door, until they could no longer hold their worship. Secularism attacks from without. Godlessness bores from within and Communism and Christianity have nothing in common. The Christian Sabbath is not a Victorian relic out of the past to be put into some museum somewhere. It is the gift of God to men, one of the few remaining moral bulwarks standing between civilization on the one hand and barbarism on the other. You are right, Emerson, Sunday is the core of our civilization.

An elderly man once related this experience to Dr. DeWitt Talmadge. He was one of a group rolling across the American prairies toward the gold coast. Their covered wagon halted one Saturday night in an outpost of civilization. On Sunday morning the rest of the men in the group said, "Come on, we are going to spend the day gambling." But the man said, "Oh, no! I cannot do that, this is the Sabbath." The others laughed at him and said, "What do you mean, the Sabbath? You know as well as we do there is no Sunday out here in the wilderness." "Oh, yes there is," came the reply, "I brought it with me across the mountains." And while the others gambled the day away, he took out his Bible and read, and like the American service man with whom we began this message, he worshipped in that temple not made with hands. "I brought it with me across the mountains."

REMEMBERING THE SABBATH

Gene E. Bartlett, First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

Have you heard about the new proposed radio program? Rumor has it that someone has proposed to buy radio time and introduce it by saying that the next fifteen minutes of silence comes to you by courtesy of a certain sponsor! If that should happen, we should all be up tinkering with our radios to see what had gone wrong! We are almost embarrassed by silence. There has to be something going on.

In such a day the time has come for a new look at a very old religious discipline. I refer to the observance of Sabbath. The word itself will call out many different pictures to us who are here, pictures that have been colored by past experiences. Its root in the Hebrew simply means "rest." Even in ancient times that was counted so essential to life that in the ten commandments is the simple and direct counsel, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." It was basic to life then. Is it now?

I

First, it will be helpful to see with freshness why we need to remember the sabbath. It can be stated very directly. The urgency of keeping sabbath in our lives — and remember that the word does mean rest — arises from the problems of heart and mind and body which are so much with us in this modern time. Ours is a time which should require more sabbath not less to offset tremendous wear and tear of everyday living. The very culture we have built makes the times of rest and renewal even more necessary.

Let us look for a moment at some of the main marks of our way of life. There is, for example, the faster pace at which we live. Someone has said that whereas our forefathers would comfortably stay overnight at a roadside inn if they missed the stage coach, we are likely to be disturbed if we miss the first section of a revolving door. That faster pace is so much a part of life that it needs only to be mentioned.

Along with it is the fact that much of our work is so partial and repetitious. Routine is so large a part of the life of most people. In the era of mass production we lose the artistry of daily work.

Moreover, our days are exceedingly full. To be sure, there are some of you to whom the days now seem empty, indeed. There is a poor distribution in this mater. But generally, we do more, go more, and try to see more. Almost always there is something going on. Isn't it important in such a time that we ask, What's going in?

Even deeper in its effect upon us is the mood in which most of us have lived our adult years. A family in those nostalgic days when the sabbath was kept so rigidly was never bombarded as we are, several times a day by headlines which proclaimed that the world stood on the edge of a great abyss. We have not taken into account what it does to us to have the news of catastrophe poured upon us day after day. It is bound to leave its effect upon our hearts and minds. So real is this that Professor Paul Hillich, one of our most discerning theologians, has said that a modern person "experiences his present situation in terms of disruption, conflict, self-destruction, and meaninglessness and despair in all realms of his life."

What does it do to us? It has left us with some very deep needs of which we are at least partly aware.

One of those is to find ourselves. Who are you? And what is your peace in God's world? It was not an ancient mystic but a very modern woman who wrote recently, "But I want,

first of all, to be at peace with myself. I want a singleness of eye, a purity of intention, a central core to my life which will enable me to carry out my obligations and activities as well as I can." Such words will immediately find their echo in the hearts of many of us here. We hardly have time to get acquainted with ourselves.

One could add the fact that somewhere we have lost the joy that we believe should be in life. Surrounded by multitudes of things, with our houses full of gadgets, with more things in our possession than any people in history, there is still about us a sadness.

Why remember the sabbath? Urgent personal needs in us make it so important.

II

But for most of us the question is even more practical. How then can we make the sabbath real? How keep it holy? Stated most simply, the sabbath becomes holy and real only as it is reserved for the worship of God and for the renewal of the things of the spirit.

Consider for a moment how many of the great realities of life are all around us waiting for our taking time to receive them. There is healing in the sun, but it rests with us as to whether we expose ourselves or not. There is a great wealth of music waiting for anyone who will take time to listen. There is a tremendous heritage of literature, but it still waits upon our opening the books to read it. There is for all of us somewhere a love to be received, but we have to take time to receive it. The great news of the gospel is that God surrounds every life as closely as the air we breathe, but He does not force Himself upon us. He is there waiting for our finding the time, the hour of sabbath when we renew ourselves in Him.

There are some things that we know we can do to discover a real sabbath experience in our modern time. One of those, of course, is to place now a reservation upon those hours which should be held for worship. Worship at its best is a time of meeting, a meeting, of course, with each other, but deeper than that, with God.

Friends of ours who were in concentration camp during the war tell how the men and women were separated from each other. Yet, there was a certain hour in the evening when they might come to a certain fence and visit for a few moments, husband and wife. How important that time of meeting was for renewal, for the restoration of love and hope! Equally important is the reserving of the hour when we shall meet with One who has first loved us. And from that meeting, too, shall come hope and renewal and strength. Only as that takes place have we really made the sabbath holy. Only then does it bring its gifts to our lives.

I would add also that a real sabbath requires us to bring our best to the times of worship.

Many years ago I came upon records of a church at which I was minister and discovered that in the early days they had had the practice of a covenant meeting. This meant that each Saturday afternoon before the Communion service the people came together for a time of preparation. Here they joined in prayer, of confession and penitence. Thus when they came the next day to the Lord's Table they had prepared themselves. They came bringing the best they could. We know that it isn't enough even when we bring our best. The mercy of God alone can receive us. But this does not make possible a careless and haphazard presentation of our soul before God. It ought to be a sacred and holy time, and we should bring the best gifts we can to honor Him.

III

Moreover, I would add that worship becomes holy when we achieve

a togetherness. It is every difficult to have great worship or any sense of sabbath when there is strain between people. Some years ago two young women found themselves on the same boat crossing the Pacific to come to this country. One of them was from Japan and the other from the Philippines. By chance they were seated at the same table in the dining room. The hurts of war were still very much upon them. And here was a Philippine girl seated beside a Japanese who had brought such havoc to their island. The Philippine girl thought of her family, some of whom had lost their lives. She did not show up at the table for the next meal. The next morning she came out of her cabin and started for the dining room and almost literally ran into the Japanese girl. Tears came to the eyes of the Japanese student as she led the Philippine girl by the arm back into her room and there begged her forgiveness. And when that forgiveness was given, they went arm in arm not only to the dining room but to the experiences they were to have in the months to come. There may be times when just such preparation is necessary to make the sabbath time real.

Ours is a time that looks with great longing to words like those in the hymn,

"O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above!"

Reserve those hours now for the rest of your life that week by week there may come the great experience of the rest of the hymn,

"Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace."

THE PROBLEM OF SUNDAY

J. R. Brokhoff, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N. C.

And Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?"—Luke 14:3.

What shall we do on Sunday? That is a problem for many people. It is for individuals like the eight year old girl who asked, "Is it a sin to sew on Sunday?" or like the adult whose store decided to open on Sundays and was told that he had to work or lose his job. To work on Sunday is against his principles. Shall he compromise his convictions or shall he stop working and have no income for his family?

What to do on Sundays is a problem for all of America. A wave of secularism and commercialism has gone over our country until Sunday has become almost like any other day. There is buying and selling and working until it has alarmed the church. A Roman Catholic Archbishop recently declared that in his jurisdiction of three western states it would be a mortal sin for Catholics to participate in buying and selling on Sundays.

Jesus faced the same problem. A man with the dropsy was brought to Jesus on the Sabbath. The religious leaders of his day watched to see whether he would break the Sabbath laws by healing the man. That is why Jesus asked them, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" He healed the man. At another time he and his disciples broke the Sabbath laws by plucking and eating corn because they were hungry. In Matthew's gospel it is reported that after Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath the Pharisees consulted with the Herodians on how to put Jesus to death. One of the main reasons for putting Jesus on the cross was his supposed violations of the Sabbath laws. By our abuse of the Sabbath laws today we are still crucifying Christ. The

problem of Sunday, therefore, is no simple, non-essential problem. It is important enough to cause Christ to be re-crucified. Could we be guilty of this crime in our day?

I

The problem of Sunday consists of the abuse of Sunday by going to extremes in observing it. The one extreme is as bad as the other. In Jesus' day there is one extreme. In our day we are at the other extreme.

Sunday is a problem when it is too strictly observed as an end in itself. The day was used to put a straitjacket on people. Nothing could be done on the Sabbath except to worship and pray. In Moses' day the Bible tells us a man was literally stoned to death because he picked up sticks on Sunday. In Jesus' day, religious leaders made a list of 39 types of work prohibited under the command, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." Under each of these types, many more laws dealing with specific items were pronounced and strictly enforced. It was against the law to walk on grass on Sunday, because it was a part of harvest work. Shoes with nails could not be worn on the Sabbath, because the nails constituted a weight that had to be carried. Carrying a burden on the Sabbath was a violation of the law. A fire could not be lighted nor an egg boiled on the Sabbath. A woman was not permitted to look in a mirror on the Sabbath lest she find a grey hair and pull it out. Pulling it out would be considered work. Plucking grain and husking it to eat on the Sabbath was banned because it was the work of reaping and threshing. Among orthodox Jews many of these laws are still observed. In Israeli it is reported that smoking is not permitted on the Sabbath because it would violate the command not to light a fire on the holy day.

This extreme observance of the Sabbath was brought to our country by the Puritans. They passed Sunday laws in New England that were very severe. It was against the law 200 years ago in New England for one to cross a river or to run. Kissing a child was banned. Golfing and gardening were on the list of prohibited deeds. Being frivolous was condemned. Violators of these laws were put either in the stocks or in jail or made to pay a fine.

This strict observance of Sunday fortified by the laws of the land was an abuse of Sunday. It made Sunday an end in itself. The day was more important than man. Jesus opposed this severe observance. For he claimed that "Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." He, therefore, healed on the Sabbath day, though it was against the law of his day, because man's welfare was more important than a day. For this liberal attitude Jesus was condemned, and still is today by those who want a perfectly closed Sunday.

II

The other extreme is just as bad and does as much harm. It is the extreme of a totally open Sunday when a man can do anything he pleases. There would be no laws regarding the use of Sunday. In recent generations we have become more and more lax about the use of Sunday. Our great-grandfathers called Sunday the holy Sabbath. Our grandfathers called it the Sabbath. Our fathers gave it the name of Sunday. Now we call it a holiday. The day has become a day for a commercial and secular spree. We think of it as a day to get a maximum of pleasure.

Various groups of people are supporting an open Sunday. They are working for the repeal of whatever Sunday laws we have. One group is represented by an editorial which called for the rescinding of all Blue Laws because the present Blue Laws are inadequate and unjust. That may be true. It is unjust that some stores may be open on Sundays while others may be closed. While the present

laws dealing with Sunday may be inadequate and unjust. is it good thinking to say that they should be banned? Because some laws sare unjust, do we say about laws not concerning Sunday that all laws should be banned? Would it not be good common sense to change our unjust laws to make them adequate and fair for all?

Another group is against Sunday restrictive laws because they claim such laws constitute a violation of the principle of the church and state. It is true our Constitution supports the principle, but it never meant that the state should be free from religion. It is inconceivable that the state and church should be in water-tight compartments, each one free from the influence of the other. There are areas of cooperation between state and church that are necessary for the welfare of all. We must remember that America, as the Supreme Court said some years ago when discussing the principle of separation of church and state, that we are a religious people. Our country is founded upon Biblical principles. The state is in duty bound to reflect in its laws the divine law. The observance of Sunday is not a human but a divine law, one of the Ten Commandments, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

Some erroneously think that the Sunday laws are a violation of religious liberty by compelling people to be religious or to go to church. That is not the purpose of the laws. These civil laws on Sunday are designed to protect the rights of those who want to go to church on Sundays. If these laws were not on the statute books, Sunday would become a wide open day for work and pleasure. One business would decide to open on Sunday. His competitor across the street in self defense would feel obligated to open, though he does not want to work on Sundays. The next business in the other block would be forced to open. This would continue until all stores would be open. First we permit the grocery stores to open. Then the furniture stores would demand they be allowed to open. On and on this would go until all stores would be doing business and industry would be forced to keep working on Sundays. People to hold their jobs would be forced to work on Sundays. They could not go to church and observe the Sabbath.

This would not be in the best interests of our country. Let us never forget that a country's peace and prosperity depend upon the moral and spiritual fibre of its people. This fibre is the result of people going to God's House on Sundays for spiritual development. Take away the commandment on the Sabbath, and the whole arch of Ten Commandments will fall. This will produce corruption and chaos in the city and country. Is this what we want? If it is, all we need to do is banish the restrictive Sunday laws and open the day for commercialism.

Another group opposed to Sunday laws consists of the minorities who do not observe Sunday as their sabbath. They claim: "It is not fair to make us by law to stop work and to close our stores when Sunday is not our Sabbath." That sounds fair and just. But we must remember that we are a democracy. The cardinal principle of democracy is that the minority goes along with the majority. It is impossible to please everybody. Every man cannot have his own way. In a democracy it is most essential that the minority go along with the majority when it is for the good of the majority. Our country is at least nominally 90% Christian. We consider ourselves a Chritsian nation even though only 60% is technically Christian. It is well for our country that the 90% observe Sunday as God wants it observed, because it is well for our people to receive moral and spiritual training on Sunday. If we would rescind our Sunday laws, it

would open wide the gates for a totally commercial Sunday and for a spitiually neglected populace.

III

There is the problem. What is the solution? Jesus gives it in the statement: "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." In these words he is saying that the sabbath is not an end in itself but a means to an end. The end is man. The day should be used for the spiritual and physical welfare of man. There is the principle. How can it be applied in our lives today?

First, Sunday is for religion. The law is "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." Since only God is holy, the day cannot be kept holy without God. Sunday is God's day and not man's. "This is the day the Lord hath made." God commanded that one day of each week be set aside for Him and His purposes. When we violate it, we take from God what is His. A Chinese was walking down the street and saw a beggar. He had seven coins. The man, moved by the beggar's petition, gave him six. The beggar followed the man and stole the seventh coin. How terrible! How ungrateful! Yet, is that not what we are doing to God when we fail to keep Sunday for God? He gives us six days of each week for our purposes. One day is for His work.

How shall we keep this day for God? One way is to go to church to fulfill man's duty to God. The basic duty of a creature is to give the Creator proper reverence and respect. Before every other duty, we have the basic duty to go to God's house to praise Him for His goodness, and to thank Him for His mercy.

Another way to keep the day holy is to keep it for religious instruction. This is the day to learn the Bible. It is the day to bring our children to the church school for moral training and character development. This is so important because today we let our children get 30 hours of secular education but only one hour of religious education. If Sunday is not properly observed, our children will get no religious education whatsoever. In consequence, we will be raising a generation of pagans.

Sunday is the day for God to feed our souls. We must remember that we are more than bodies and minds. These disappear at death. The soul lives on. It is naturally more important. Actually, essentially we are not bodies or minds but living souls. These souls can die of malnutrition just as the body can. The soul needs to be fed and cultivated by the Word of God received in church on Sundays.

Second, Sunday is for rest. The commandment on the Sabbath is very definite in saying that six days shalt thou work but on the seventh day thou shalt do no work. Not to work means to rest. This is a fundamental law written in all of creation including man. We have day and night, for at night all creation seems to come to rest. We have been made creatures needing an average of eight hours of sleep. Even the organs of our bodies which seem to be working constantly, like the heart, take rest. Doctors report that the heart rests a fraction of a second each beat, and this fraction by the end of a day adds up to quite an amount.

Sunday was designed as a day of rest. It is intended that on this day there shall be no work. Does this mean absolutely no work of any kind? The religious leaders of Jesus' day thought so. Not Jesus. He said, "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath day." It is right to help and heal on the sabbath. Those who perform works of emergency, essential services vital to the welfare of mankind, and mercy can do so with a good conscience. Putting it on the negative side, if this work were not done, the welfare of man would be curbed.

Our problem today, however, is

not what it was in Jesus' day. Then laws kept men from doing good work on the Sabbath. Now, our problem is working on jobs not essential to human welfare. We have six days to buy and sell. Why do we insist upon doing it on the seventh? Some claim grocery stores need to be open on Sunday because people need to buy food. This is ridiculous in a day when we have modern refrigeration and canned goods. There is not a person in our country who cannot, if he will, store up enough food to last for 24 hours.

Businesses that decide to close on Sundays profit. A service station operator decided to close his on Sundays. His friends told him to do so would be business suicide because the station across the street was going to keep open. The man replied, "If I cannot make a living in six days, I will change my occupation. My children need their Daddy on Sundays." After six months of closing on Sundays, he found that his net profit was greater than when he was open on Sundays. This fits into the testimony of the Scriptures. They say repeatedly that violation of the Sabbath will bring doom and hardship to a people, but the observance of the same will bring blessing and prosperity.

IV

Third, Sunday is for recreation. What shall we do after we have fed our souls through worship and religious education and not worked on Sundays? Shall we spend the rest of the day twiddling our thumbs? Some extremists would answer affirmatively. Jesus would answer, if we understand his spirit correctly, negatively. Sunday is to be used for the spiritual and physical renewal of man. He may participate in those activities that he considers recreation. No definite laws can be made as to what is recreation and what is work. It all depends upon the individual involved. Gardening, for example, may be work for some but recreation for others. If it it recreation, Sunday can be used for sewing or swimming, golfing or gardening.

Two principles must be remembered, however, in using Sunday for recreation. First, God must come first. It is a violation of the Sabbath commandment to go to the mountains or to the seashore or to take a trip to relatives or friends and not go to church. God must come first. It is likewise wrong to spend Sunday resting in bed or at home reading the paper or piddling around the house. It is rest, yes, but rest without God getting first attention is horribly wrong. This is the problem of our day. We are using Sunday for rest and recreation and forgetting to give God His due by going to church. This is paramount. Luther explained the third commandment: "We should so fear and love God as not to despise His Word nor the preaching of the gosple, but deem it holy and willingly hear and learn it." You can see, Luther put the emphasis upon hearing and learning God's Word as the essential way of keeping the Sabbath holy.

Again, we must keep in mind that our recreation must be re-creation of body and mind. If our Sunday recreation results in dissipation, we are abusing Sunday. Our Sundays often constitute a "lost weekend." We have drunk excessively and caroused until we reached the point of going to work on Mondays with a headache and a mild hangover. We call the first day of the work-week "Blue Monday." It is often blue because we violated the Blue Laws of Sunday. If we keep Sunday for the re-creation of body, mind, and soul, we shall face each work-week with great anticipation and strength. We will do better work and we will have a better chance in succeeding in our jobs.

The solution to the problem of Sunday lies in the hands of Christian people. Stores are open on Sundays

because Christian people patronize them. If we would stop buying non-essential items and do all of our shopping during the week, the stores would not find it profitable to be open on Sundays. Moreover, the solution is in our hands because we have the privilege of writing to the Mayor and Councilmen about the menace of further liberalizing the Sunday laws. Politicians are guided by public opinion. Shall the religious people of the community or the business interests guide our city fathers? The solution is in your hands according to your individual observance of Sunday. Is it primarily a day for religion, then a day for rest, and the balance for recreation? If so, this is the solution of the problem of Sunday.

THE SABBATH

Clarence Edward Macartney, One-time Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

And madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath.—Nehemiah 9:14.

Nehemiah is one of the noblest and one of the grandest characters of the Bible. In his book, which is one of the greatest pieces of autobiography ever written, he several times makes the prayer, "Remember me, O my God, for good." That prayer has been answered; and today, and through all the ages since Nehemiah lived, he is remembered for good; for the uprightness and integrity of his character, for his fear of God, and the good that he did to his nation and mankind. Among other achievements Nehemiah was a great Sabbath reformer, as we shall note later on in this sermon. The prayers of Nehemiah are among the most uplifting in the Bible. In this prayer which he made when the wall of Jerusalem was finished and dedicated, he rehearses the history of the nation and God's wondrous dealings with it. Among the great blessings which God bestows upon the nation, he mentions the Sabbath: "And madest known unto them thy Holy Sabbath."

Here Nehemiah speaks of the Sabbath as God's great gift to the nation and to mankind. So Jesus spoke of the Sabbath when he said the Sabbath was "made for man." The Sabbath was made for man; not for the Jew alone, but for all mankind. God provided for the good of man, his body, his mind, his soul, three great institutions — the Bible, the church and the Sabbath. Of these the Sabbath is the oldest. It was, indeed, given amid the thunders of Sinai. But it goes far back of that. Its authority lies in the everlasting necessities of human nature as man was created. It is infixed in the creative order of the universe, inscribed on the heavens and on the earth. It is coeval with marriage and with paradise. Marriage and paradise and the Sabbath all appear in the second chapter of the Bible, and all were established for man's good. The Sabbath as it first appears in the dawn of man's history bears the beautiful imprint of man's then unfallen nature.

Since the Sabbath was ordained for man's good, it may seem a very strange thing that man should have rebelled against this law and this most beneficent of institutions. Today it is by the few enthroned, and by the many still neglected. How shall we account for this strange attitude on the part of man, and especially on the part of Christians, to the Sabbath? The only way to account for it is the moral catastrophe which overtook man at the very beginning and turned his mind and his nature against God.

Have you ever heard the German legend about the man in the moon, with the bundle on his back? According to the story, a man on a Sabbath day went out into the forest to cut wood. He was returning from the forest with his axe and the bundle of faggots on his back, when a man clothed in Sunday garb, and, no doubt, an angel in disguise, met him and said to him: "Do you not know that this is the day of rest and of worship, the Sabbath day? Why do you cut wood on the Sabbath?" With a scornful laugh the man answered, "Sunday on earth, Monday in heaven, it's all the same to me." Then said the angel in disguise: "You shall bear your bundle forever; and, as you value not the Sabbath on earth, yours shall be a perpetual Monday in heaven; and you shall stand for eternity in the moon, a warning for all Sabbath breakers." Whereupon the man was caught up into the moon, where he has stood with the bundle on his back ever since. This legend embodies profound truth. As man has rejected and neglected and profaned the Sabbath, he has added to the weight of his labor and has put a heavy burden on his back.

I

The Sabbath is God's voice to the Nation. Let it be remembered that God deals with nations as well as with individuals. In a certain sense the Jewish nation and the Jewish Church were identical. Great blessings are promised to the Jewish nation if it obeys and honors the Sabbath, and judgments are pronounced upon it for dishonoring the Sabbath. When Nehemiah did his great work of Sabbath reform, he said to the people and their leaders: "What evil thing is this that you do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus? And did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel."

It is often said that the Pilgrims and the Puritans crossed the seas for "freedom to worship God." It is not so generally known, however, that one of the chief freedoms they sought was the freedom of a Christian Sabbath — the freedom to bring up their children in a community where the Lord's Day was kept holy. The reaction which came in with the Restoration of the monarchy in England, after the rule of the Commonwealth and Cromwell, tried to turn England into a camp of revelry, and the Sabbath was made the great day for sports. From that environment the Pilgrims desired to get free; and for that freedom they crossed the wintry seas, endured the winters of the bleak New England shore and the menace of the savage tribes.

The Puritans and Pilgrims of New England are often spoken of as narrow and bigoted, and chiefly because of their observance of the Sabbath.

Men like to call the Puritans "blue noses" and to ridicule them as Richard Braithwait did in 1638:

> To Banbury came I, O profane one!
> Where I saw a Puritane one
> Hanging of his cat on Monday,
> For killing of a mouse on Sunday.

Perhaps sometimes in their revolt from the revelry of the days of King James and Charles the Second they did go to extremes. But see what they produced! See the heritage they left unto us! In the way of moral character, what does America owe to Sunday baseball, Sunday golf, Sunday parades or Sunday shows? Very little indeed, if anything. But it owes a great deal to the Christian Sabbath and to those who in the fear of God and the love of mankind kept the Sabbath holy. Those first settlers on the bleak New England shore proclaimed that their first object in coming to America was to add some "territory to the realm of God."

The Comte de Tocqueville, who wrote one of the earliest and most

reasoned accounts of the American democracy, paid a visit to America in 1831. He spent a Sabbath in a resort town in New York. On Sunday morning he noted the quiet and hush of the town in contrast with the rush of business and pleasure on the Saturday. He said to his host, "What is the occasion of this stillness and quiet? Is somebody dead?" "No," the answer was, "this is the Sabbath." Afterwards the Comte de Tocqueville wrote of our country: "America is great and strong because the spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers has so permeated the people that as a whole they take one day in seven to stop, reflect and worship."

In his day Jesus found the temple of God shamefully profaned and violated. No heathen idols were set up in the temple, as some of the apostate kings in former ages had done; but the idol of avarice and greed was set up in the temple area; and in righteous indignation Jesus took a whip of cords and drove the traders from the sacred precincts, saying, "My house shall be called an house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." I have no doubt that that profanation of the temple came on gradually. First one shrewd trader saw that the coming of the people to the temple for worship afforded a good opportunity for business, and set up his booth in the temple courtyard. Others brought in their doves and pigeons; and finally the tables of the money changers and brokers were set up and did a flourishing business. That evil and sameful condition came on gradually. Gradually, too, our nation, which owes so much of its moral character to the Christian Sabbath, has invaded its sacred territory with business and pleasure. Now Sunday has become for a great number the day of slumber, of pleasure, of travel and of business. Sunday is the day for viewing real estate, for visiting houses for rent, for political gatherings and conferences, and even for college commencements. It has been said that if all the automobiles in the country were laid end to end across the continent, it would be Sunday afternoon!

II

The Sabbath is the Voice of God to his Church. In his "Apology for Christianity," written in the second century, the great defender of Christianity, Justin Martyr, said, describing the Christian worship: "We all of us assemble together on Sunday, because it is the first day in which God changed darkness and matter and made the world; on the same day also Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead and appeared to his apostles and disciples."

The Jewish Sabbath celebrated the completion of the great work of creation of the physical universe and of man. But the Christian Sabbath commemorates the completion of the redemption of mankind, when Christ rose from the dead.

There is all the more reason, therefore, why the Christian disciple should honor the Sabbath. It is an interesting fact that in the New Testament there is only one apostolic commandment concerning the keeping of the Sabbath, and that is to 'give." In his First Letter to the Corinthians, and just following the sublime chapter on the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul, St. Paul write: "Now concerning the collection—upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him." That is the only commandment in the New Testament about the keeping of the Sabbath. But too often that commandment to give to God and to our fellow man on the Lord's Day is reversed, and, instead of giving, an increasing number of Christians are using the day as a day on which they "take," rather than give.

Think of the inestimable blessings which have been conferred upon

the human race through the observance of the almost 100,000 Christian Sabbaths which have passed since the resurrection of Christ. Are these blessings to be lost today? Naboth, out of loyalty to his fathers and his fathers' God, refused to sell his vineyard to the avaricious Ahab, and was stoned to death for his refusal. In a day when so many Christians are disloyal to the day without which the Church could not exist, and go with the multitude to do iniquity, we need men like Naboth, who shall refuse to sell and betray their inheritance.

Phillips Brooks, returning from a trip to the Far East, was asked about what articles he had brought back with him and what customs duty he had to pay. The friend, facetiously, asked him too if he had tried to bring back a new religion. Brooks replied that he had not tried to do so; but if he had done so, there would have been no difficulty about customs duties, for America would be glad to import a religion "without any duties."

The Christian Sabbath gives a follower of Christ a splendid opportunity to witness for Christ. Many of the things which are written about the Sabbath in the book of Isaiah were written for a people going into exile. The best means provided them for remembering Jerusalem and their relationship to God was to remember the Sabbath Day. The observance of the Sabbath lets the world know you belong to Christ; that you are not your own, that you have been bought with a price.

The Sabbath is the voice of God to man's soul. "How much better," said Jesus, "is a man than a sheep!" The difference between man and the sheep is measured by the immeasurable worth of man's soul.

The stream of religion and faith will run deep or shallow according as the banks of the channel are neglected or kept in repair, just as a stream or river runs deep or shallow as its banks are neglected or kept in repair. Robinson Crusoe on his lonely isle, shut off from his fellow man and from the sacraments and the worship of the Church, wisely sought to keep himself in touch with God and with his Christian hope and inheritance by setting up a pole on which he cut a notch for every day, and a double notch for every Sabbath. On this day he confessed his sins to God and prayed to him to have mercy on him through Jesus Christ.

In the story in Exodus of the travels of the Children of Israel when they came out of Egypt we read how, "They came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm trees, and they encamped there by the waters." You can imagine how grateful that rest and refreshment at Elim with its twelve wells of water and its seventy palm trees must have been to those weary pilgrims. I like to think of the Sabbath Day as an Elim where we rest and meditate upon that part of our journey already accomplished, and look forward to the journey yet to come, and at length the journey's end, when we shall "go no more out and come no more in."

Sir Matthew Hale, seventeenth century Lord Chief Justice of England, in his quaint lines in a letter to his children gave them this advice, good advice for children, and for adults too:

A Sabbath well spent brings a
week of content,
And health for the toils of to-
morrow;
But a Sabbath profaned,
Whatsoe'r may be gained,
Is a certain forerunner of sor-
row.

Recently, in a railroad station I wanted to telephone to a friend in New York. I did not take the telephone out on the railroad platform in the midst of the noise of traffic,

but went into the telephone booth and closed the doors, so that I could hear and be heard. Amid the turmoil and uproar and confusion of our daily life the Sabbath gives you an opportunity to speak with God, to seek after the higher things. Have you ever watched an eagle, or other large bird, in its flight through the sky above you? Just a few strokes of those powerful wings and the great bird soars on through space, with no motion of its wings visible. So the Sabbath gives the soul a spiritual and heavenly impulse.

There are two attitudes toward the Sabbath described in the Bible: one, that of the avaricious merchants and traders of Israel who complained, "When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat?" The other attitude, and the true one, is that of the Psalmist in the 118th Psalm, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." That is what God meant the Sabbath to be for us, for so he said, through the Prophet Isaiah: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath and call the Sabbath a delight, holy of the Lord, honorable, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."

"Will a man rob God?" asked the prophet Malachi when he was telling the people to honor God with their neglected tithes. The same question might well be asked concerning God's Day, "Will a man rob God?" A native Chinese preacher, speaking on this subject of robbing God, told of a man who went to market with a string of seven coins. Seeing a beggar who asked for alms, he gave the man six coins, and kept only one for himself. The beggar, instead of being thankful, followed the good man and stole from him the seventh coin also. Miserable ingrate, you say. But how different is that from stealing from God, who has given us the six days for ourselves, the Seventh Day also?

The Sabbath might well be called the truce of God, a divinely appointed pause in the warfare for our souls, and against evil and the temptations that beset us. The Sabbath, which was coeval with Paradise and the Garden of Eden, is now for us a bridge from Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained, that which is come; the Paradise of which Jesus spoke on the Cross, when he said to that Penitent Robber, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

George Herbert, who strikes some of the finest notes in English poetry, uses some beautiful metaphors in his verses on "Sunday." He speaks of Sunday as "the pillar on which heaven's palace arched lies"; and again, how the "Sundays of a man's life, threaded together on Time's string, make bracelets to adorn the wife of the eternal, glorious King." But perhaps the best lines, and one of the most beautiful things ever said of the Sabbath, are found in the first stanza:

O day most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
The endorsement of supreme delight;
Writ by a friend, and with his blood;
The couch of Time; Care's balm and bay;
The weak were dark but for thy light;
Thy torch doth show the way.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

(Continued from page 2)

ble Protestant values and their reappraisal in the light of modern need. (Association Press, 188 pp., $3.50.)

The Church Redemptive concerns the mission of the church in "creating, nurturing and sustaining the fel-

lowship of faith" and is, according to its author, Howard Grimes of the Perkins School of Theology, a confession of faith in the importance of the church in the day-by-day existence of the Christian. The book centers in three convictions: that many Protestants fail to realize the significance of the church, that the church to act as the church must understand what it is, and that an understanding of the church as the People of God and the Fellowship of men with God is crucial. Part I deals with the nature of the church and Part II with the more practical aspects of Fellowship, its responsibilities, work and witness. Every pastor will find in this book substance for thought and for sermon-making. Not often are we offered as keen an interpretation as this book presents. (Abingdon, 191 pp., $3.50.)

A revised and enlarged edition of Archibald M. Hunter's **Introducing the New Testament** will be welcomed by those who have long kept the first edition within arm's reach. The present volume expands the discussions in the earlier volume and now brings together the author interpretations of all New Testament writings. The book is important for church school leaders, youth counsellors, teachers who need an introductory volume for church and school study groups. (Westminster Press, 208 pp., $3.) Complementing the previous book is Dr. Hunter's **Introducing New Testament Theology,** a book which highlights the major emphases, bypasses the controversial positions, and offers an illuminating presentation of the ministry of Jesus and his early and later interpreters. This splendid book makes theology pertinent, understandable, and dramatic. (Westminster Press, 160 pp., $2.50.)

Prophetic Preaching: A New Approach, by Otto J. Baab of the Garrett Biblical Institute, is a rewarding examination of the times and messages of the prophets and indicates how modern preachers may proclaim a redemptive message with power and effectiveness. Although the approach is not especially new, the book is a much-needed antidote to the casual indifference and deadening timidity which one too frequently finds in twentieth century pulpits. The various chapters consider the passion, problem, purpose, power, perspective, proclamation and promise of prophetic preaching. (Abingdon Press, 159 pp., $2.50.)

JOHN W. MEISTER
WESLEY P. FORD
WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN
ENSWORTH REISNER

THE BOOK THAT WILL NOT FAIL

John W. Meister, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Do you understand what you are reading?—Acts 8:30.

E. Stanley Jones, the great Methodist evangelist, once said, "I do not know how the future is coming out, but I do know that it belongs to those who belong to Christ."

This is another way of saying that God is the Lord of human affairs. James Russell Lowell expressed the same faith in a more beautiful way:

Though the cause of evil prosper,
Yet 'tis truth alone is strong;
Though her portion be the scaffold,
And upon the throne be wrong,
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow
Keeping watch above His own.

History does have a way of working out which vindicates truth and goodness and love. Such is our hope, our faith, our conviction.

But this is also our judgment. Suppose that history upholds the truth and we are in error — what then? Suppose that God is on the side of goodness and we are bad — what then? Suppose that the universe is founded upon Love and we are selfish — what then? Then our hope has become our despair; our faith has become our doom.

These are not idle questions. They point up the necessity of bringing ourselves and all whom we love and all that we hold precious under the sway of God's Kingdom. If the future belongs to those who belong to Jesus, then we must see to it that we, our loved ones, our nation, our way of life are so changed that we and they do belong to Him.

The bitter fact is that even with our current return to religion we are not speedily extending the rule of Christ. Even though the churches report tremendous gains in membership, those gains total little more than the increase in population. If we are to save ourselves and all that we treasure we must step up the rate of winning people to the Christian way of life.

I

The Scripture found in Acts 8:26-38 tells how one man was won for the Kingdom. In this incident from real life I see emerging a pattern for extending the kingdom of Christ in our own day.

First, **there must be a hunger for God** — which in this instance is typified by the Ethiopian eunuch. We do not know this man's name, but we do know that he was a prominent and wealthy citizen of the region south of the Nile River. He was a responsible citizen, for he served as secretary of the treasury in the queen's government. This Ethiopian had traveled from North Africa to Jerusalem for one purpose: to worship God. While we must admit the outside possibility that he was a Jew, it seems far more probable that he was not. In either case, he had come to Jerusalem because he was searching for God. Jerusalem was known far and wide as the place where great men of the Spirit explored the realms of unseen things, and he had traveled this distance to satisfy his hunger for the Eternal.

No one can be brought under the

kingship of Jesus without this hunger for God. We can go through the motions of religious faith, but we can never find the real article until we want God more than anything else in all the world. The story is told of a man who went to a great religious leader of ancient times and said, "Sir, what must I do to find God?" The religious leader took the man by the hand and led him into a nearby stream, where he immersed the seeker in the water. When they came out on the bank again the prophet said, "When your head was under water what did you desire more than anything else in all the world?" The man answered, "Air." The prophet said, "When you want God as much as you wanted air you shall find him."

Those of us who are eager to extend the rule of Christ can rejoice that one mark of our time is a widespread hunger for the eternal. Man has lost his idolatrous confidence in his own powers. An increasing number of people freely admit that man by himself is not adequate for life in this world. He needs a power beyond himself.

II

After the hunger for God, **there must be a revelation of God.** Indeed, the very longing for the Eeternal is in itself part of the revelation of God. We do not even look for God until He has first found us. But the extension of the Kingdom depends upon a more complete revelation.

The Ethiopian's hunger for God drove him to Jerusalem. He could not find God, however, apart from God's unveiling of himself. This unveiling occurred for the Ethiopian as it has for countless others by means of a book — in this instance, the Book of Isaiah. While he was in Jerusalem he came by a copy of Isaiah — or perhaps only a few paragraphs—and was reading it on his homeward way. And it was through the pages of this book that God chose to reveal his own character.

It would be a gross error to suggest that the only way God reveals himself is through the book we call our Bible. Too many people have found him through mystical prayer, and in the lives of sacrificial persons, and in the worship of the church, and in the ordered voice of nature, and in the lessons of human history. But this much we can say: Because God has revealed himself in a Person called Jesus, and because the Bible records the Advent and impact of that Person — the Bible will not fail the soul that hungers after God.

To be sure, the Bible will not reveal God in any automatic or magical way. It takes "a heap o' livin'" with the Bible to find the spirit of the living God within its pages. But when the honestly hungry soul feeds upon the pages of the book, it will not fail.

Just such a hungry soul wrote a hymn which is mistakenly used frequently in services of Holy Communion when it ought to be reserved for use with the reading of the Scriptures:

Break thou the bread of life,
dear Lord to me,
As thou didst break the loaves
beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page I seek
thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee, O living
Word.

If we will read the Scriptures with that prayer in our hearts we shall find real religious faith:

Beyond the sacred page I seek
thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee, O Living
Word.

III

One thing else is needed to expand the kingdom. There must be a hunger for God and a revelation of God. There must also be a child of God — a child of God to serve as interpreter, guide and witness. Philip was just such a child of God. He was in tune with the Almighty. As he looked back over his experience with the Ethio-

pian he knew that he had been led to go to the highway that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza, that he had been led to speak with the Ethopian stranger, and that he had been led to ask the lead-question: "Do you understand what you are reading?" And notice what happened: The Ethopian said, "How can I understand unless someone guides me?" Then "Philip opened his mouth, and . . . told him the good news of Jesus."

This is perhaps the hardest thing we twentieth-century Americans find in the Christian life. We are world-famous for our ability to sell — but when it comes to our faith we are for the most part hesitant to talk about it. We are willing to live the Christian life — or try to — but we are quite unwilling to talk about Christ. Yet we spread ideas not only by living them but also by talking about them. For example: one of the things that made possible the abolition of slavery was that Abraham Lincoln lived out the idea of abolition. But that by itself would not have been enough. Lincoln not only lived it; he talked about it again and again, in the Cooper Union address, the Lincoln-Douglas debates, in the inaugural addresses, and in speeches before Congress. He talked about it wherever he went, and so the movement spread — not only by the power of his example but also by the power of his persuasion.

This is apparently what happened in the early church. The Christians lived their faith, so that Tertullian could write, "See how these Christians love one another." But they also talked about it. Philip climbed up in the chariot and "opened his mouth." When people saw the early Christians they said, 'Look at them." Then they said, "Listen to them!"

If you and I are in dead earnest about this matter of bringing all whom we care about under the kingship of Christ, we must pry our tongues loose and "tell about the good news of Jesus."

A young Presbyterian minister was in charge of a large church in a great industrial city. The most active and generous person of the church was a woman. She was married to one of the most prominent and wealthy men of the community. He never came to church, he did nothing for it, he gave nothing to it. And as the years want on, that man was on the conscience of the young minister. He said to himself, "I must do something about that man." So, after long deliberation, he finally made an appointment with him. He was an older man, austere, sitting behind a great desk in his office. The young man sat in front of him and proceeded with his story. In very simple terms he set before him the Christian proposition and he said, "I think you ought to do something about this one way or the other." And when he finished, there was dead silence. The man never spoke, never moved.

So the young man gathered himself together and went over his story again, amplifying it a little. When he finished, still there was silence. At that point he wished he had never undertaken that particular mission, but he drew himself up once again and rehearsed his story. When he finished there was not a sound. Finally, while he wished for a way out of the room, the man reached for a pad and wrote something on it. He passed it to the young man and this was what he had written: "I am so deeply moved that I cannot speak." It was the first time that an adult, in a frank, straightforward way, had ever set before him the Christian gospel. He became a member of the church and one of the great Christian leaders in that city.

Someone you know has never had the claims of Jesus put squarely to him. If you want the future to belong to that man you can open your mouth and speak to him of Jesus.

THE WORD OF LIFE

Wesley P. Ford, Central Christian Church, Pasadena, California

In my undergraduate days, hoping for an easy way, I asked a professor if he recommended the study of Greek. He replied, "If I were going to be a minister I would want to read the New Testament." I realized at once what he was saying. Greek was the New Testament language and whatever we have in other languages is another's interpretation of what the original meant.

The Bible is a record of revelation. It is the story of man's reach toward God, and of God's reach toward man. But the vehicle of revelation is personality. Man expresses truth by what he does and what he says. And there must be a written record of both if they are to be passed on.

But the truth is not easily confined to words. Silence, at times, is life's highest expression. Language is the product of group environment. It is limited to time and area. Spending a summer in Japan was to become vividly aware of the limitations of language. Because we are so dependent upon words we must forever say with Paul, "Now I know in part."

I

The first compilation of the fragmentary documents which were destined to become the sacred scriptures were but partial insights into the prophet mind and heart. And because different people have different languages, and because words within a given language do not remain fixed there must always be translations.

As early as the third century B.C. Old Testament books were being translated from their original Hebrew into Greek. New Testament books were written in Greek but before the end of the fourth century, the Latin translation became the Bible. And with this period came also the hierarchy of the Roman church with the notion that the Bible was only for the clergy.

In 1382 John Wyclif, believing that the Bible should be made available for the common man, completed the first translation from Latin into English. Copies were hand written and very scarce. A farmer would pay as much as a load of hay for the privilege of reading from the New Testament for a single day. But the new day was suppressed by a law saying that any person reading the scriptures in English would forfeit his land, his life, and his goods.

The fifteenth century brought the invention of the printing press to provide a tremendous potential for the circulation of the Bible. In 1525 William Tyndale made the first English translation of the New Testament to be printed. Copies were smuggled into circulation and Tyndale was in danger. The Bishop of London made a deal to purchase every copy of a printed Bible that they may be burned. Tyndale accepted the bargain and the Bibles were burned. But with the money received he proceeded immediately with a new and better translation for which he was imprisoned, and on October 6, 1536, strangled and burned.

But the work went forward. A translation by John Rogers, relying heavily upon the work of Tyndale, captured the mind of the archbishop who interceded until the king granted a license "that the Bible may be sold and read by every person." About the same time a translation by Myles Cloverdale appeared that became known as the "chained" Bible because it was necessary to chain copies to the lectern of the churches lest they be taken. In 1560 another translation known as the Geneva Bible appeared containing, for the first time, divisions into verses.

King James, who came to the throne early in the seventeenth cen-

tury, had a genuine interest in the Bible. He appointed 54 of the most learned men of the day to write a new translation and the King James Version appeared in 1611. In addition to scholarship, this era was characterized by good literature. The works of Shakespeare, Spencer, Marlow, Bacon and others influenced literature and the King James Version was called, "The noblest monument of English prose." Here was the most accurate work possible in the seventeenth century set in beautiful language.

II

From the King James Bible came the Revised Standard Version of 1881 and the American Revised of 1901. Then there followed that monumental work in our own day, the new Standard Version authorized by the Protestant churches and finally published in 1952. Many have asked, why a new version? There are several reasons.

First, if the Bible contains the word of life it ought to be as accurate as possible. Scholars in our day are nearer the original manuscripts. The King James translation relied on two dozen manuscripts; now there are over 4,000. These, discovered through research and archaeology, shed new light.

Second, in the delicate work of translation it is impossible to avoid some errors. In the light of new evidence errors in old texts are discovered. For example, according to the King James Version, Pilate, speaking to the chief priests and scribes said of Jesus, "Nothing worthy of death has been done unto him," the meaning of which is indeed vague. In the Revised Version, the text becomes, "Nothing deserving death has been done by him." In the interest of clarity we need such corrections.

A third reason is that words have new meanings. Words in our own language do not remain constant. Nor are they easy to match with corresponding words in other languages. When the first missionaries translated the Bible into the Japanese language as they knew it, the Lord's Prayer, instead of saying "Our Father who art in heaven," read, "Our papa who lives upstairs."

There are over 300 words in the King James Bible used in a sense substantially different from that which they now convey. For instance, in the seventeenth century "prevent" was used to mean "precede." So the psalmist said, "I prevented the dawning of the morning." That would be difficult! But the Revised Version catches the meaning, "I rise before dawn." There is a difference between prevent and precede. First Corinthians says in the King James Version, "Let no man seek his own but every man another's wealth," This sounds like a burglar's license. The Revised Version restores the meaning, "Let no man seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."

About 100 years ago the Bible was translated into Arabic. It was necessary to construct a word for the "creeping things" of the first chapter in Genesis. "Let the earth bring forth cattle and creeping things." By following the regular rules for word derivation the translators found a satisfactory term. But a few years ago something new in the way of armaments came to the Arabs, and they sought a word for "armored tanks." By following the same rules they arrived at the same word. So it would seem, by the Genesis account, that on the sixth day the Lord created cattle and armored tanks.

III

It is enough to establish the need. One of the most thrilling accounts in history is that of the translations of sacred scripture. Unfortunately this path, too, is stained by martyr's blood. This for two reasons: One when sacred truth is cast in word molds the words for some becom

more sacred than the truth. Because they believe the truth has been tampered with some will not read modern translations. I am reminded of one who said, "The King James Version was good enough for Paul and it is good enough for me." The other reason for martyrs is the effort of those in authority to prevent truth from reaching the minds of common folk. It seems to the advantage of some for the common man not to know that God loves him.

Now, what difference does it make that the best scholarship has brought us the most accurate interpretation of the Bible, and that men have paid with their lives that we may read it freely? For some it matters little. Last week I read of a woman who found in her Bible the deed to her house which had been missing since 1937. Latin translations or unpunctuated versions are just as satisfactory for ornaments or filing cabinets.

But some are hungry for truth. Many are not sustained by bread and meat. Their spirits, too, must be fed. And we who want to know are limited by knowledge to a single language and to the meaning of words in our day. We, therefore, are anxious for the best scholarship that the Bible may speak to us with the fullness of its message and power.

Consider what has happened in 500 years. Then there were no printed documents. We would be standing in long cues waiting our turn for somebody's hand copy. Just over 400 years ago we would be reading our Bibles in secret lest we be discovered and put to death! The word of life, available in everyone's language waiting to be read freely is something new!

And we add in conclusion that the most perfect translation in word is limited. "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God." But words are inadequate. They help, they inspire, they lead, but our Christian gospel is of flesh and blood. It cannot be confined to the pages of a book. And so by the choice of God, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, and we have beheld his glory."

Every translation must now be seen in the light of the message and spirit of Jesus Christ. And when we have judged the new translation by him we remember that we who wear his name become the translations that others read. We are translators of the word of life. We have the gospel according to Matthew and Luke, and some have the gospel according to you and me. The word of life can direct the course of history only if it is allowed to stir our minds and hearts until we in turn give it expression in all that we say and do.

A LAMP FOR YOUR FEET

William Goddard Sherman, First Methodist Church, Stuart, Florida

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.—Psalm 119:105.

The journey of life is a perilous one. The wise traveler will be prepared for his journey, making certain that all things are in order to assure safety. Even so should the traveler upon the highways of life be prepared for every emergency.

No man dare venture upon a highway cloaked in darkness unless he be prepared with adequate light to make clear the road ahead. And just so no man dare try to travel the dark and mysterious highways of life without light upon that uncertain path.

There is adequate light to be had. The Bible is that lamp for your feet, which will guide them every step of the way. The Bible can boast such power because it is the Word of God; it is the heavenly light which guides

the feet of the faithful that they may not falter.

The Scripture casts the light of God upon the most meaningful areas of man's experience. Though every mystery is not solved, and every corner does not glow with radiance, there is sufficient light that the child of God may walk serenely down the pathway of life, confident that the Lord's guidance will not fail.

I

The Bible Explores the Enigma of Existence. No man knows what life is, no one can describe it. At one moment we see a body filled with life and animation. The next moment we may see that same body lifeless and cold. Yet physically there is no difference. What is this thing called "life" which departs a physical body and leaves it limp? No one knows.

Only this we know: this blessing we call life is a gift of the Creator. It is God Who has made us, and breathed into us the breath of life. Recognizing this fact, we can scarcely conclude that life has no meaning. God has not created us to no earthly purpose. There must be meaning to this existence or we would not exist.

The Bible has much light to throw upon this age-old riddle of life. It points out the spiritual values, emphasizing the fact that the physical is only a facet of life. Man's real existence is on the spiritual level.

Our emphasis upon man's depravity often blinds us to man's grandeur. The Bible sees great potentialities in all men. Jesus chose His disciples not for what they were, but for what they could become. Kierkegaard, in his great work, **The Sickness Unto Death,** points out that "however vain and conceited men may be, they have nevertheless for the most part a very lowly conception of themselves, that is to say, they have no conception of being spirit, the absolute of all that a man can be."

The enigma of existence becomes less of an enigma when we discover the mission of the soul. Man is to glorify God. God has redeemed us for that purpose.

The Bible throws its light upon the ancient mystery and brings us to the conviction that our lives count in the sight of God. It is no accident that we are here; it does not surprise the Almighty! Let us determine to give our lives meaning in order that they may glorify our Saviour.

II

The Bible Destroys the Dungeon of Despair. The visitor to old Fort Marion in Saint Augustine, Florida, is taken into the dungeon which imprisoned Osceola. My boyhood home was only a few miles from there, and I visited the fort often. But even so I always felt a shudder and chill when the guides turned out the lights and left us in absolute darkness.

The soul of man is often cast into just such a dungeon of inky blackness. Life is unkind to many hearts, and no heart is without its share of misery. How desperately we need the assurance of a Higher Power.

Think again of old Fort Marion. I can remember as a child that when the lights were turned out in the dungeon, I wanted to make sure my father or mother was close beside me. Just so the child of God longs to clasp the hand of the heavenly Father in the dungeon of despair. At such a time we want the assurance that He is close beside us.

The Bible provides light for life's hours of blackness. Light in the form of a promise of His abiding Presence: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me." The dungeon of despair is destroyed and the darkness is dispelled. God will not forsake us. The welfare of His children is His unending concern.

God does not promise that we shall never be led into the valley of the shadow. But he does promise that we need not tread that valley alone

This is the promise that casts a ray of light into every hour of darkness; this is the promise that frees us from the dungeon of despair which so often imprisons us on life's journey.

III

The Bible Diminishes the Darkness of Death. Someone once likened life to a patchwork quilt. Every one of us has found that his life is made up of a variety of moods, just as a quilt is a pattern of various designs and colors. Just as the beauty of the quilt results from the proper blending of these varied designs, so life to be happy must represent the harmonious blending of the darker moods and moments of life with the lighter.

There is no greater darkness which descends upon us than the darkness of death. It is here, if anywhere, that we need light upon our path. Thank God for the precious truths of Scripture which do send a shining ray into the tragic hour.

Recall the light which shone upon the darkest hour of the life of Joseph Addison. This great man of letters was also a man of God, and he had committed much of God's Word to memory. As he passed from this world into the next there was a smile of peace upon his face. And it is said that he died with this phrase upon his lips: "See in what perfect peace a Christian can die."

The harmonious blend of light and dark can be achieved only when we have such a view of death as this. The light from the sacred pages can transform that dark hour into a joyous experience, as we meet our Saviour face to face. The light which can accomplish this is possible because our Lord has proved His power over death. Through His Resurrection we also come into the presence of the Father forever.

IV

The Bible Enhances the Expectation of Eternity. Many and varied are the conceptions of eternal life. Some have understood it to be a dreamless sleep; others a sleepless dream. Still others have believed, or feared, that the grave is the end of all. Whatver the understanding of eternity, it is not without fear to all those who do not know Christ as Saviour.

The Bible teaches us that sharing eternity with the Father is an experience, not to be feared, but anticipated. Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." And then He followed this statement with the assurance, "I go to prepare a place for **you.**" The experience of eternity will be a thrilling one to those who are the Lord's redeemed.

When the Bible produces such unfailing light for life's mystery-laden areas, is it not foolish for any man to grope his way along the highway in utter darkness? Yet so many are doing just this. There are so few who seek His guidance; there are so few who trust His grace.

What of your own life? Are you walking in darkness because you have not sought the will and wisdom of the Lord? Or can you say with the psalmist, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path?"

WHAT MAY A CHRISTIAN BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE?

Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist Church, Milwaukee, Wis.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.—John 1:14.

"The Bible is as dead as the proverbial dodo, Dad." The older man deflated his breath like a badly punctured tire. "That," he said, "is what my son said when he returned from college. Tell me, pastor, what do you say to a boy that doesn't believe in the Bible?" I questioned the father, 'Does your son know the Bible that he says he doesn't believe in?" "He

came from a good home, went to Sunday School until he went to college where he took a regular college course in Bible, and we always have a Bible lying on the living room table."

"Lying on the living room table." Dead? This is all too familiar to the Christian families of our generation. Few people are as candid as the young college graduate. True, the Bible is appreciated as great and ancient literature but how often do we pick up great literature instead of a magazine or the daily paper? If the source book of our religion is to live in our hearts it must cease to be an ancient but dead tome and become a living word. A theological school professor recently told his class, "You will go out of this school into a jungle of religious illiteracy, so don't go waving Bible verses around in the air, or chanting your belief in the Holy Writ, or you will become another witch doctor rattling the bones of a dead faith. The only way to bring the word of God to life is to live it."

What may a Christian believe about the Bible? That it is the living word of God. The proof of that is only in living. Scholars of scripture in the days of our Lord said they believed the Holy Writ and as proof could quote every jot and tittle of the scriptural text. But Jesus said of these vessels of scriptural knowledge that they were filled with "dead men's bones," were "whited sepulchers." On the other hand it was said of Jesus that he was the fulfillment of the scripture and that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." What may a Christian believe about the Bible? Not that the Bible is dead, but that it is the living word of God. Just what do we mean by that?

I

First, you may believe that the Bible is inspired. A young drama student, her arms filled with books on the theatre, pointed to the Bible and said, "Do you call that inspired? Look at all the 'begats'! 'Alutub begat Zadok and Zadok begat Shallum and Shallum begat Hilkiah, etc.'" "Obviously," I said, "it doesn't inspire you, and yet you are inspired by all those books on the theatre." She looked quizzical as if groping for the connection as I continued, "To be inspired you must be interested. Naturally you aren't interested in the 'begats' of the Hebrew genealogists, but have you ever studied the art forms of the great Hebrew dramatists, and learned how they expressed the powerful urges of man toward God?" Her eyes were kindled with a new interest. She began to read and study and put into effect in her own writing and acting the dramatic situations which she found in the word of God. A dramatic critic observing one of her plays wrote this, "The author is truly inspired as from above."

The true test of Biblical inspiration is not found in the dogmatic assertion that each word is inspired, but in the fact that the Bible has been and is inspiring to those who put into effect in their own lives what they find in the Bible. It is true that many people are impressed with sermons that piously quote much scripture. Indeed it is valuable and inspiring accurately to quote scriptures, that people may be helped to see the relation between their own problems and the inspiring portions of the Bible. But let us beware that we do not allow a dead, perfunctory practice to take the place of the living inspiration that comes from doing what we learn from the Bible.

II

Second, we may believe that the Bible is true as well as inspiring. A clergyman friend of mine said, "I emphasize the inspiring qualities of the Bible, but you can't believe that all that is in the Bible is true." I disagree with my colleague. There are too many modern readers of the Bi

ple who when they see they cannot take the Bible literally also refuse to take the Bible seriously. The Bible for them becomes merely a fine literary exposition of an inspiring but impractical ideal.

There are too many ways of robbing a person of his influence and position of importance. One is to demote him and the other is to "kick him upstairs." There are some who demote the Bible to a position of unimportance by refusing to read it or pay any attention to it. There are others who would kick the Bible upstairs by considering that its truths are merely impractical ideals to be talked about and given every honor but not sufficiently true to be lived. To do either is to kill the living truth of the word of God.

Certainly the communist would destroy the truth of the Bible by demoting it to the position of mere superstition, an opiate of the people. Let us be careful that we do not equal injury to the truth of the word of God by giving lip service to the high ideals of the Bible at the same time we refuse to accept these truths as practical and realistic.

III

But how can you believe the truth of the Bible in the face of all modern day knowledge? A proud agnostic pointed out: "In the Bible they say the earth is flat and the sky is a brass bowl, and we know that that is not true. Noble scientists died martyr's deaths to prove that some of the things in the Bible were not so. If part of the Bible isn't true, then how do you know any of it is true?" That is a reasonable question. It all depends upon what kind of truth you are looking for. If you are looking for the dead truth of past fact you will find only the dead truth of past fact in the Bible. It is a fact, a true fact that the people who wrote one portion of the Bible believed that the earth was flat and the truth of this fact which once people believed died when it was discovered that the earth was not flat. If we look to the Bible as a text book in geography, modern astronomy, modern medicine, or even sociology or history, or law, we will find it sadly lacking because in these fields of truth the Bible only records past facts of what men once thought and as such the Bible is only an ancient curiosity.

The living truth of the Bible is the truth of living experience, the living relationship between man and God. Thus all the modern evolutionary knowledge of scientific research does not change one iota the truth of Genesis where it says that God made man in his own image; nor man's search into origin of evil and suffering as disclosed in the story of Adam and Eve. The history of Israel, the great declarations of the prophets, the magnificent majesty of the Psalms, the vivid imagery of books like Ruth and Esther, the stark revelations of the laws of the universe which we find in the story of the Ten Commandments, the desperate struggle to find the meaning of suffering which we find in Job, the letters of admonition and explanation which we find in the Pauline Epistles, and finally, but not least, the biographies of Jesus: all these truths are expressions of a living truth which the people who wrote on these things experienced. We can share these sacred experiences and so the truth of the Bible lives in us. I am not so concerned that persons accept the verbal truth of each Bible phrase literally as I am that the living truth of man's experience in the Bible be taken seriously and lived.

REACHING IN PICTURES

(Continued from page 2)

dollars when you prepare a similar meal with your old-fashioned utensils?"

wered, "Don't you throw away five

He put his point across. I wondered about my sermons. Do my points get across the pulpit with equal clarity? Or is their effect like that of the sermon in Tennyson's "Northern Farmer":

An 'eard 'um a bummin' away like a buzzard cock ower my 'ead,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a mean'd but I thowt a 'as summut to saay,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I coom'd away.

Recently my middle son found himself in the midst of a traffic accident and his father found himself the recipient of the following letter:

"We are subrogated to the rights of our insured to the extent of the payment which is made by us as a result of this claim. You are, hereby notified that we claim a lien in the amount of such payment upon any amount that may be paid by you or your insurance carrier in settlement with our insured, or upon any monies paid by you in satisfaction of any judgment which he may procure against you."

The question came to me: In my effort to show profound thought, do my sermons read likewise? To get clarity in our sermons, I believe one rule is necessary. Use picture words which convey meaning.

Some years ago an English clergyman was sent to minister to a country village church – much against his wishes. But he set himself to win his people. He set to work learning the language of his flock. He noted every word they used in conversation and in time he collected about three hundred words. He would prepare his sermon in his own style. Next, he would follow through by translating the sermon into the local dialect, avoiding the use of words which he thought were strangers to his people. Slowly his Sunday audiences grew larger. Eventually, not only his church, but also his churchyard was full of people who had come to listen to "the parson who talked sense."

My neighbor, Harold Bosley, tells the story of his son questioning him upon his return from a teaching and speaking tour in the Far East. The boy asked, "But father, you speak no Japanese. How could they understand you?" Dr. Bosley answered that he would preach two or three sentences. He would then stop and allow his Japanese interpreter to convey his message to the people, after which he would again speak in English.

His son asked, "Dad, why don't you do that in your own pulpit?"

Better ask why don't we do that in our studies before reaching the pulpit. We could write our sermons a la Tillich and Niebuhr, but on completion transpose them to a key whose music stirs our people. We could put our abstractions into pictures which our people could see.

When Abe Lincoln was a boy of fourteen, he would listen to the conversations of the men about politics or religion. Then he would pace the loft of his Pigeon Creek home, trying to put the ideas he had heard into language which a boy could understand. He could not sleep when he got on the hunt for an idea, until he had caught it and trapped it with right words. When he had finally put the concept into language plain enough for any boy to comprehend he could go to sleep. By this method he developed his power of clear expression.

How much easier to preach in abstract terms than in pictures. How much simpler to beseech our people to be Christians than to picture for them, in exact terms, a man living a life of "Jack Riley is a Christian." How much more difficult to picture Jack Riley paying his bills on time, feeding a beggar, guiding his family, giving to the United Fund, escorting a blind man across the street, or eating with the underprivileged. Picture-painting requires time and struggle. How much easier to say, "Jack Riley is a Christian."

But the semanticists tell us that mply saying "Jack Riley is a Chris- an" permits every pew-sitter to de- ne a Christian in the current, popu- r fashion as a "polite gentleman." onsequently many members leave urch wearing self-imposed halos!

If Jesus had resorted to logical rea- ns, the story of the good shepherd ould not be remembered. But it is membered because he answered s critics by saying, "What man of u having one hundred sheep . . ." Today when you see a picture of sus on a mountain side holding a eep, you at once think of the story. hen you hear a reference to a "lost eep," your mind quickly grasps the le Jesus told.

But Jesus did not wish to be partial men. He continued: "What woman you having ten pieces of silver and sing one of them . . . I tell you ere is joy in the presence of the gels."

And he brought in youth. How d he say it? Did he say, "A young an lost his inheritance in riotous ing and when he returned home s father forgave him?" No. He told, p by step, a dramatic story. Read How many wasted words? None. e sketch has all the dramatic qual- s of a good story: suspense, action, position, conflict, remorse, discov- and reversal, joy, climax, victory.

Suppose you wished to portray the th that God cares enormously for ry living soul — invalid, aged, minal, alcoholic, evil, delinquent? w would you tell it to people so y would remember it? Jesus ex- ssed that truth so dramatically t the world has never forgotten How? A sheep, a coin, a son.

The Bible exhorts us to become as le children. Would that we could nt word pictures as they do. Dr. nold Gesell once said, "The child five is a pragmatist and defines ngs in terms of use." Observe these rsery and kindergarten gems:

Mashed potatoes are to give everybody enough.

A lap is so you don't get crumbs on the floor.

A dream is to look at the night and see things.

Cats are so you can have kittens.

Buttons are to keep people warm.

Once we, too, could express ourselves like that. Now we worship our ease of handling abstract ideas in generalizations and our parishioners go away like the Northern Farmer — with only words — no pictures to remember. How many of our sermons have started out with great promise, yet they never arrived because they were woven of concepts rather than of pictures. The great preachers never wrote that way. They projected the Bible incidents on to the screen of the mind.

Why do our people fail to grasp our abstract ideas? Because men's minds are often sluggish, and we cannot get them to listen unless our case is stated with warmth and a vigor which the imagination alone can supply. Others are not accessible to abstract argument, but recognize truth at once when it assumes some concrete form with which imagination may invest it. Some cannot follow the successive steps of our demonstration, but they admit the truth of our proposition once we show them the diagram. Again, the great truths rest often, not upon abstract reasoning, but upon facts. When we preachers use our imaginations and compel the hearers to use theirs, facts become vivid and real. Let the preacher do his thinking in the abstract, as Michaelangelo studied the human frame in a skeleton, but let him clothe it for the people in color.

In **Paradise Lost,** Milton claimed it was his purpose to "justify the ways of God to men," but many critics insist that the weakest parts of his great work are the formal justifications — the long speeches of the Father in Books III and X, which deal with the theological and cosmological ex-

planations – the repeated arguments about free will and foreknowledge. In these sections surely Satan steals the show, for Satan indulges in no tiresome moralizing, but is seen suffering and struggling valiantly. By the strokes of Milton's brush, Satan becomes a more attractive figure than Milton's idealogical God.

How often we preachers by our strokes make a better case for evil than for good. A few weeks ago I called a local Rest Home to inquire about a parishioner. The nurse's reply left no doubt as to her condition. She answered with clarity: "Her condition is status quo." Lord help us to preach like that.

WORTH QUOTING

E. Paul Hovey, The Federated Churches, Lewiston, Idaho

A little girl came downstairs early one morning, happy and filled with life. But suddenly her feelings changed from gaiety to sad concern. For there in the kitchen getting breakfast stood her mother, her face trouble-shadowed like a dark cloud. "Mommy," asked the little girl, "aren't you happy?"

"Why certainly I'm happy," snapped the worried mother.

"Well," said the little girl, "you certainly haven't told your face yet!"

—Dale Evans Rogers

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When Cain killed Abel, Adam and Eve could not blame the TV, radio, movie, or comic book. They themselves had failed.

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I respectfully submit that the church cannot rest content with seeking to guide man's individual pilgrimage through life; that it must also concern itself with the collective behavior of individuals as citizens of the community, of the nation and of the world."—James P. Warburg.

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Mistakes happen so easily, why do you have to help them along?

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The tragedy of today is not the noisiness of the bad people, but the silence of the good people. Too many are so objectively analytical that they never get subjectively committed.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

* * *

Physicist Arthur Compton addressed a large gathering of college students, presenting a strong case for Christianity. Later, a young student asked, "How can you really prove to me what it is like to be a Christian? I want definite proof."

Dr. Compton asked for an orange, proceeded to peel it and eat it as everyone watched. On finishing, he asked the questioner. "Do you know what the orange tasted like?"

"Of course, I don't," came the reply. "Only the person who ate it can tell that."

"So it is with Christianity," Mr. Compton concluded, "You must taste it yourself."

* * *

Questions

Did "trial and error" bridge the chasm
Between mankind and protoplasm?
And can it be that this good world
Is by blind chance midst chaos
whirl'd?
No! I believe the scheme of things
Is ordered by the King of Kings,
And as man's knowledge grows im
mense
He'll glimpse sublime intelligence.

—Harcourt Price in Rotarian

* * *

Addressing the United Church
Canada's Annual Conference
Evangelism recently, Professor A
bert T. Rasmussen of Colgate Roche
ter Divinity School observed that "t
church should be a chamber of co
merce in reverse. It should point
what is wrong in the community. T
great sin of the church is to be
interested in serving those within
that it can not serve those without.